

Expeditionary Strike Group/ Expeditionary Strike Force

The Marine Corps is cooperating with the Navy in a series of experiments that are exploring the Expeditionary Strike Group and Expeditionary Strike Force concepts. As noted, the ESG concept will combine the capabilities of surface action groups, submarines, and maritime patrol aircraft with those of Amphibious Ready Groups and



Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) [MEU (SOC)s] to provide greater combat capabilities to theater combatant commanders. Expanding on the ESG, the Expeditionary Strike Force

integrates the Carrier Strike Group, the Expeditionary Strike Group, and the sea-basing functions provided by the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) to provide an even more potent capability.

In 2003, the Navy-Marine Corps team will conduct a pilot deployment on the West Coast to test the ESG concept. Navy combatants have already been incorporated within the existing training and deployment cycles of an Amphibious Ready Group. In addition, this experiment will allow the testing of different command-and-control arrangements for the ESG.

This experiment will allow the Naval Services to analyze the impact of the ESG model during the work up, deployment, and employment phases. It will provide critical information to support the future implementation of the concept and highlight any changes that are required in service doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities.

[The United States Navy](#)

The Expeditionary Strike Group

More information is available on each of the types of ships shown here. To view, the information on the particular type of ship, select the ship's silhouette. This will take you to the *Navy Fact File*. Note: To return here, you will need to use your "Back" button."



**Amphibious Assault Ship
(LHA)**



**Amphibious Assault Ship
(LHD)**



**Amphibious Transport
Dock
(LPD)**



**Dock Landing Ship
(LSD)**

The Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) centers on the flexibility and readiness of a combined expeditionary unit and an [amphibious readiness group](#) (ARG). The total ESG provides operational freedom and expanded warfare capabilities, not only by land with embarked Marines, but at sea, as well. The exact make-up of an Expeditionary Strike Group is in the process of being defined, but currently consists of:

- **An Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA or LHD)** – Primary landing ships, resembling small aircraft carriers, designed to put troops on hostile shores. In a secondary role, using AV-8B *Harrier* aircraft and anti-submarine warfare helicopters, these ships perform sea control and limited power projection missions.
- **An Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD) Ship** – Warships that embark, transport, and land elements of a landing force for a variety of expeditionary warfare missions.
- **A Dock Landing Ship (LSD)** – Dock Landing Ships support amphibious operations including landings via [Landing Craft Air Cushion \(LCAC\)](#), conventional landing craft and helicopters, onto hostile shores. The three classes of LSDs are the *Harpers Ferry* class, *Whidbey Island* class, and *Anchorage* class.
- **Guided Missile Cruiser** – multi-mission surface combatant. Equipped with *Tomahawks* for long-range strike capability.
- **Guided Missile Destroyer** – multi-mission surface combatant, used primarily for anti-air warfare (AAW)
- **Frigate** – primarily for anti-submarine warfare (ASW)



**Cruiser
(CG)**



- **Attack Submarine** – in a direct support role seeking out and destroying hostile surface ships and submarines
- **A Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)** – missions range from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to major theater war

**Guided Missile Destroyer
(DDG)**



- **AV-8B *Harrier II*** – Attack and destroy surface targets under day and night visual conditions.
- **CH-53D *Sea Stallion* helicopters** – A medium lift helicopter designed to transport personnel, supplies and equipment in support of amphibious and shore operations.

**Frigates
(FFG)**



- **CH-46D *Sea Knight* helicopters** – Medium lift assault helicopter, primarily used to move cargo and troops.
- **AH-1W *Super Cobra* helicopters** – Provides fire support and fire support coordination to the landing force during amphibious assaults and subsequent operations ashore.

**Attack Submarine
(SSN)**



AV-8B *Harrier II*



**CH-53D *Sea Stallion*
helicopters**



**CH-46D/E *Sea Knight*
helicopters**





AH-1W Super Cobra
helicopters



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The Amphibious Ready Group

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**Amphibious Assault Ship
(LHA)**



**Amphibious Assault Ship
(LHD)**



**Amphibious Transport
Dock
(LPD)**

At the most basic level, an amphibious force consists of a Navy element — a group of ships known as an amphibious task force (ATF) — and a landing force (LF) of U.S. Marines (and occasionally, U.S. Army troops), in total about 5,000 people. Together, these elements — and supporting units — are trained, organized, and equipped to perform amphibious operations. The Amphibious Ready Group consists of:

- **An Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA or LHD)** – Primary landing ships, resembling small aircraft carriers, designed to put troops on hostile shores. In a secondary role, using AV-8B *Harrier* aircraft and anti-submarine warfare helicopters, these ships perform sea control and limited power projection missions.
- **An Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD) Ship** – Warships that embark, transport, and land elements of a landing force for a variety of expeditionary warfare missions.
- **A Dock Landing Ship (LSD)** – Dock Landing Ships support amphibious operations including landings via [Landing Craft Air Cushion \(LCAC\)](#), conventional landing craft and helicopters, onto hostile shores. The three classes of LSDs are the *Harpers Ferry* class, *Whidbey Island* class, and *Anchorage* class.
- **A Marine Expeditionary Unit** – missions range from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to major theater war
- **AV-8B *Harrier II*** – Attack and destroy surface targets under day and night visual conditions.
- **CH-53D *Sea Stallion* helicopters** – A medium lift helicopter designed to transport personnel, supplies and equipment in support of amphibious and shore operations.



**Dock Landing Ship
(LSD)**



**Dock Landing Ship
(LSD)**



AV-8B Harrier II



**CH-53D Sea Stallion
helicopters**



- **CH-46D Sea Knight helicopters** – Medium lift assault helicopter, primarily used to move cargo and troops.
- **AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters** – Provides fire support and fire support coordination to the landing force during amphibious assaults and subsequent operations ashore.

The resulting forces may range from a single Amphibious Ready Group/ Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) [ARG/MEU (SOC)], to a larger organization capable of employing a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) or even a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF).

Amphibious forces must be capable of performing missions ranging from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to major theater war (MTW). Additionally, they can be configured and deployed to operate at various levels of conflict and in multiple theaters simultaneously. They can provide a presence that may preclude adventurous actions by a potential belligerent.

Because they are seabased and because the decision to position and engage amphibious forces will always be easily reversible, amphibious forces greatly expand the repertoire of available response options. Among other national resources, they are particularly well placed to provide a demonstration of U.S. commitment and resolve to friends and allies as well as adversaries.

Normally two to three ARGs are forward deployed: one in the Mediterranean/Arabian Gulf-Indian Ocean area, and one or two in the western Pacific area. The other ships of the ARG are either working up to deploy, in transit, or in overhaul. One ARG/MEU is forward based in Sasebo and Okinawa, Japan.

In most cases, the ATF will be deployed under the protective umbrella of an aircraft carrier battle group (CVBG), which provides cover for the ATF and combat support to operations ashore. Ships of the ATF are capable of embarking and supporting other forces when the mission requires, including U.S. Army, Special Operations Forces (SOF), or other joint and combined forces."

**CH-46D/E *Sea Knight*
helicopters**



**AH-1W *Super Cobra*
helicopters**



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